

**Northampton Policing Review Commission  
Policies and Services Subcommittee Agenda  
Tuesday January 12, 7PM-8:30PM by Zoom**

Join the Remote Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/93231555923?pwd=R1RuN0NtakVCVHFiQmtBN3JRa1Y1Zz09>

Meeting ID: 932 3155 5923 Passcode: 358758

Or by telephone, call: +1 929 436 2866

1. Call to Order by meeting chair, Nick Fleisher
  - a. Announcement of Zoom Recording
  - b. Roll Call
  - c. Approval of Minutes
  
2. Revisit focal topics for subcommittee work:  
Complaint process – waiting for response of department  
Man hours – police activities: Wellness checks; Property checks; Disturbances; Traffic Stops. “Proactive vs. passive policing”
3. Cynthia update report on domestic violence.
4. Nick update report on Homeless Liaison Officer
5. Questions for meeting with the Northampton Police Chief
6. New Business
7. Proposed Agenda for next meeting
8. Adjourn

## **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Nick Fleisher at 7:03 PM.

## **ROLL CALL:**

<b>Nick Fleisher</b>	<b>present</b>
<b>David Hoose</b>	<b>present</b>
<b>Elizabeth Barajas-Roman</b>	<b>Arrived at 7:06pm</b>
<b>Nnamdi Pole</b>	<b>present</b>
<b>Cynthia Suopis</b>	<b>present</b>

## **ANNOUNCEMENT OF ZOOM RECORDING**

Commissioner Nick Fleisher made an announcement that this meeting was being recorded for the public record. The recording will be available on Northampton Open Media, as well as, the City of Northampton website.

## **Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 29, 2020**

Commissioner Dan Fleisher moved to approve the meeting minutes from December 29, 2020.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said three commissioners noted they were open to the police attending the committee meeting and said Nick's opinion was not noted and Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman wasn't present to vote.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher clarified that the minutes accurately reflected his position hasn't been articulated.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher requested Noa Coffey-Moore send a [link to the city council meeting](#) where Commissioner Dan presented.

## **2. Questions for meeting with the Northampton Police Chief**

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman said she is in support of the Chief of Police attending a subcommittee meeting and recommended the commissioners come up with specific questions.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said he is in support of the Chief of Police attending. He said he feels like bringing her to answer questions would be helpful.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said she would like to ask Chief Kasper, whether she feels the NPD has an opportunity or a strategy to respond.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said he agrees with Commissioner Cynthia's question.

Commissioner David Hoose said her response is not going to be anything that approaches his sense of the commission's feelings around the need for reform. He said she's a cop, and her attitude toward police reform will predictably be about the good job officers are doing. He said he doesn't want to stifle commissioners from asking the question, but hopes the commission doesn't go too far abroad. He said he's in favor of reaching out to the Chief Kasper to hear what she has to say.

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman said she wondered about asking what the barriers are in the way of serving this community as well as what her philosophy is around policing currently. She said even that meeting time is precious.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said she doesn't see this questioning as central, but thinks of it as a question to ask at the end of the commission has time.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said the purpose of asking this question is is important to understand the NPD's willingness to make changes. He said it's worth the commission's time to hear what the Chief is willing to do, that the commission might not know already.

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman said she wants to ask what are the barriers, and what is keeping change from happening. She said her impression of the chief was that she is open to listen, which is a good place to start. She said the events of last week left her with conflicting feelings about policing in general, as some officers took selfies, and some officers protected people heroically. She said getting a sense of the vision from Chief Kasper in terms of reducing the footprint of certain types of interactions, could be interesting.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said he's not assuming about what the chief would say to some of these things. He said he wants to hear the world of policing, and the world of people who see grays and he would like to hear where she stands on the idea of police reform. He said asking her about the commission's recommendations isn't what he sees as happening, but her views and attitudes could be informative about what she's willing to imagine for her own police force that might be different. He said this subcommittee is assigned to look at things the police currently do that they might be able to do differently, even with coming up with alternative models. He said alternative models don't eliminate the police. He said he feels the police still have work to do, and that he's heard powerful and convincing testimony on how things need to be taken away. He said there are some things the police will be doing that need to be doing with more imagination to be a more informed and better police force. He said he doesn't see this as the main focus of the commission.

Commissioner David Hoose said the committee should be asking more pointed questions to Chief Kasper. He said in terms of traffic enforcement, a lot of police killings have come in the context of traffic stops. He said he's interested in asking her what she tells her officers to limit these kinds of encounters, as well as whether she would be willing to issue an order not to stop vehicles at night for minor traffic offences. He said she's not going to dismantle her own department.

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman said another question could be asking how the current things the department is doing to eliminate its usefulness. She said she finds it compelling when a director of a program can work themselves out of a position, because it's mission-driven. She said if the Chief can speak to what she's doing to reduce the need for the NPD to be in people's homes, so the department is participating in a different way with the community.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher asked Commissioner Elizabeth if she could phrase her comment as a question.

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman said she likes the phrasing of "would you be willing to x, and why."

Commissioner Nick Hoose wondered how much more time should be devoted to this. He said there seems like there's consensus to invite her, and whether the commissioners should submit their questions to Commissioner Nick at the next meeting.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said the questions would be presented to the Chief ahead of time. He wondered whether this is still the plan, and what this means for the pointed questions. He wondered whether there would be room for follow up to ask some of these questions.

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman said the types of questions are already public comment so it's not like it's a secret.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said he agrees with Commissioner Elizabeth. He said everyone should know what everyone's questions are and that it's a chase to have respectful dialogue and to understand whether she can add to the process, or not.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said it can also be an opportunity for her to correct the record on data, and speak to the policies.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said she is not in the same camp as all of her officers on certain issues. He said she made extensive efforts to remove an officer and for some reason she was not able to achieve that, and they had to back off in the context of perhaps lawsuits and union issues. He said she might not have the power or authority to do the things she would like to do, which is unlikely to change within the current police department.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher requested the commissioners send their questions to him to compile.

**3. Revisit focal topics for subcommittee work: Complaint process – waiting for response of department  
Man hours – police activities: Wellness checks; Property checks: Disturbances; Traffic Stops. “Proactive vs. passive policing”**

Commissioner Nick Fleisher asked the committee what it should focus on and how it should define its work.

Commissioner David Hoose said this will depend on what level the commission will go with its recommendations. He mentioned the subcommittee hasn't talked about body cameras yet as well as 911 service and how it would work in a new entity, in terms of staffing and training to direct calls to the appropriate responder.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said he's struggling a little bit with focus. He said he knows he's starting to develop a need to alternatives, but he feels confident the Alternatives subcommittee is doing a really good job exploring the things he's been thinking about, which brings him back to thinking the focus on the committee is much more on specifics of the current NPD and how that might interface with an alternative model.

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman said in terms of sequencing, the committee isn't going to receive a report from the Alternatives subcommittee. She wondered whether the commission will join back as a full commission as they get to the recommendations phase. She said there's a lot to be learned together from the place of the submitted report and being able to finalize recommendations from there.

Commissioner Nnami Pole said the complaints process could be discussed and characterized which would lead to a discussion about community engagement with that process. He said the balance between what is already going on, as well as what the gaps are in the current services is important. He said drilling down on the procedures and the ways we empower these individuals to use force is a place the committee could look into next. He said there is a time and place for police which was recognized by the speaker at the full commission meeting. What would be needed to maintain a police force that was minimal but still able to respond to rare circumstances such as a school shooting. He said this committee is the one that will be looking at the footprint that is left behind.

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman said detention is another place where the committee could look into. She said she didn't see any clear training, discussion, or statement about the preciousness of liberty when it comes to the citizenry of Northampton. She said defining in what cases the NPD would be willing to name and codify, and hold accountability to these things is something the committee could ask the chief.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said she gets concerned the subcommittees are siloed, and would like to see what the process is for getting their recommendations to the Alternatives committee. She said she talked to a lot of people and has interview notes, but is wondering where her research should go.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said the committee should bring these specific ideas to the next full commission meeting. He said it seems like all of the committees are thinking about a new entity. He said he thinks this new entity will need to be an evolving entity that can grow and take on more and more. He said he would like to see the current policing services not be a closed entity that doesn't have oversight from a citizen group.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said it's important to understand the status quo and that understanding where the policies are lacking is a way to understand.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher wondered whether the committee should make a list of the remaining topics they can discuss.

Commissioner David Hoose named 911 dispatch, body cameras, and the complaint process as his list.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole named Use of force and how it's documented as his list.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis named detention was mentioned.

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman said she'd like to get a better sense of what the current capacity is in terms of mobilizing during the crisis response, within the appropriate scale of the size of the Northampton Community.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher wondered which of these topics should be included in the form of a question to the chief of police and which should be a discussion.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said process questions could be answered by the Police Chief.

### **3. Cynthia update report on domestic violence.**

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said she spoke with Mary Kociela in the DA Office regarding the Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP), Becky Michaels, the Assistant DA for Restorative Justice, Mary Walz-Watson, Coordinator of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program (SANE) and Gisella Zuniga, Director of the UMASS Center for Women and Community. She said the lead agency is out of Belchertown and that the civilian advocates work full time Monday through Friday during the day. She said points of entry to this service are dispatch or individuals themselves reaching out looking for assistance ie. restraining orders, shelter, safety.

She said the advocates never go on a DV call which are considered to be some of the most dangerous calls. She said she asked whether they saw a place for the reduction of a police footprint in this area. She said many regard peer civilian advocates are essential, productive, and that their role works, but they are grant funded so there's no sustainability built into their role. She said they're all on a grant cycle which makes it difficult to plan for a prevention program. She said they talked about prevention as key to this work, and that prevention should start at the earliest age in schools. She said there used to be a program available about healthy relationships. Cynthia noted that something that has to have sustainable funding to make a prevention program. She said most training is done by Safe Passage, DA's office, or the Center for Women and Community. She said she's interested in knowing who the DV team is on the NPD, how are they trained, what courses are they taking, and why can't more officers receive this training.

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman said her main questions are for the chief to contextualize this more. She said she'd like to understand what they're doing to ensure a trained person is present in a domestic violence situation.

Commissioner Cythia Suopis said there are 35 rape kits that were filed at Cooley Dickinson Hospital and mentioned they are retained for 15 years.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole suggested perhaps the Alternatives committee can look into this further.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher agreed.

The commissioners discussed the timeframe of inviting Chief Kasper to the subcommittee.

#### **4. Nick update report on Homeless Liaison Officer**

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said he left this work to the Alternatives to Policing subcommittee.

#### **5. New Business**

There was no new business.

#### **7. Proposed Agenda for next meeting**

Commissioner Nick Fleisher noted reviewing the questions for the chief of police as an agenda item. He also noted he would like to start a conversation about the complaint procedure.

#### **8. Adjourn**

**Commissioner David Hoose moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:46pm. Commissioner Nnamdi Pole seconded the motion. The motion adjourn is passed unanimously.**